



News Release

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U.S. Army Chief of Engineers enters partnering agreement to increase Hispanic students preparing for professional technical careers

LOS ANGELES-In a move to increase the number of Hispanic students preparing for professional technical careers, Lt. Gen. Bob Flowers, Chief Engineer of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and Ray Mellado, chair and founder of the Hispanic Engineer National Achievement Awards Corp. (HENAAC), will sign a national agreement Jan. 16 at California State University, Los Angeles.

Besides signing the national memorandum of understanding between their organizations, the two leaders will also attend a ceremony at the university's Luckman Complex commemorating an earlier educational program. Previously, HENAAC and the City of Los Angeles Dept. of Recreation and Parks signed their own memo to implement "Viva Technology," the Hispanic group's innovative K-12 education program that introduces Los Angeles students to technology careers.

Cal State Los Angeles Dean of Engineering Dr. Juei-wu Tsai will serve as host for the 1:45 p.m. ceremony. "We are excited and honored to be hosting the general," Dr. Tsai, himself a civil engineer, said.

In a joint statement, Flowers and Mellado said: "We recognize that a workforce comprised of diverse, high-performing individuals with valuable talents and strengths is critical to providing excellent services to all our customers, especially soldiers and their families."

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2-2-2 HISPANIC STUDENTS

Goals for the partnership include:

- preparing Hispanic engineering students for responsible positions in an engineering and science environment;

- enlightening Hispanic engineering students about the Corps missions, unique capabilities and opportunities;

- assisting colleges and universities in their efforts to provide science and engineering education to Hispanic students;

- producing a world-class diverse pool of talent throughout the Army.

"We commit to achieve our goals through periodic partnering sessions and special study groups and through the personal commitment of team members in our respective organizations in the conduct of our day-to-day business," Flowers and Mellado said. They added that they were committed to implementing the partnership's goals "at all levels" of their organizations.

In 2002, 96% of Hispanic parents interviewed by the Tomas Rivera Policy Institute in Los Angeles expected their children to go to college. However, the institute's researchers found that 66% of parents they interviewed failed to answer four out of eight basic questions about what it takes to make college a reality for their family.

The Viva Technology program is designed to be a blueprint for helping such families. Launched in 2001 at Manual Arts High School in Los Angeles, Viva Technology has been included as a supplemental educational program at schools, housing communities and universities across the nation.

The Corps Los Angeles District also has agreed to develop a pilot Viva Technology program, and several Corps team members currently are working on that project. Brian Moore, Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, and Madeline Zamorano, recruitment and training coordinator, are spearheading the District's strategy for the program.

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3-3-3 HISPANIC STUDENTS

A new 10-week Viva Technology after-school program will begin soon at selected local schools through the L.A. Unified School District's Beyond-the-Bell Branch.

Other HENAAC partners include NASA, Raytheon, the Boeing Co., Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, the Motorola Foundation, the Lucent Foundation, Verizon Foundation, the AT&T Foundation and CH2M Hill.

Before the partnership ceremony, Lt. Gen. Flowers will meet and address HENAAC's board and staff and then tour Cal State LA's Space Lab at the College of Engineering, Computer Science and Technology. Later, he will tour the Multidiscipline Flight Dynamics Contours Lab and also observe presentations by civil engineering students on their current projects.